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A

VALEDICTORY SERMON

ON LEAVING THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

IN THE FIRST PARISH IN DORCHESTER,

1st DECEMBER, 1816;

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AND

DEDICATORY SERMON

ON ENTERING THE NEW HOUSE OF WORSHIP,

THE NEXT DAY.

BY THADDEUS MASON HARRIS, D. D.

Published by a vote of the Parish.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN ELIOT.
1817.

American Statistical
Association
Aug. 15. 1939.

PREFACE.

AS the following sermons are published at the request of the Parish for a memorial of the very interesting events on which they were delivered, I have subjoined some historical notices, *collected from various sources; and take the liberty to prefix here the introduction to the discourse delivered on the* morning *of the last Lord's day of our assembling in the old meeting house.*

The *first* sermon which I preached in this place, as a candidate,* was upon that text, [Mark iv. 24.] "Take heed *how* you hear," in which I gave some rules for the profitable hearing of sermons; the *second* was upon that passage, [Luke viii. 18.] "Take heed what you hear;" and the *third* upon that injunction, [James i. 22.] "Be ye *doers* of the word, and not *hearers* only." I now close a series of instructions, continued through twenty three years, and including one thousand three hundred and fifty sermons, by calling your attention to a discourse upon that direction which you will find in the third chapter of REVELATIONS, at the third verse; "*Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.*"

* June 16, 1793.

An additional reason for selecting this text on the occasion of quitting *this* Meeting House is, that it was used as the subject for the sermon which was preached on leaving the house of worship before this. I speak, therefore, to day, as the echo of that voice to which your fathers listened, with feelings similar to those which swell your bosoms now; and call upon you, their successors, to "*remember how you have received and heard, and hold fast and repent.*"

VALEDICTORY SERMON,

PREACHED ON THE AFTERNOON OF LORD'S DAY,

DECEMBER 1, 1816.

EXODUS xxxiii. 15.

"IF THY PRESENCE GO NOT WITH ME, CARRY US NOT UP HENCE."

IT was indispensably necessary that the Israelites should have a guide through the wilderness, on their journey towards the land of Canaan. Moses indeed was appointed their leader, but needed himself to be informed of the course which it was best to take. The Deity therefore graciously condescended to point out their way by a miraculous pillar or column, which appeared as a cloud by day and a fire by night. When this moved forward, it directed the rout they were to take; and when it became stationary, it indicated the place of encampment and rest.* Highly favoured, however, as they thus were with unerring guidance and constant protection, and notwithstanding they had recently witnessed the most astonishing displays of divine majesty at the foot of mount Sinai, they rashly incurred the displeasure of the Lord, and

* Compare Exod. xiii. 21, 22. Numbers ix. 16. Psalms cv. 39.

"The Lord himself chose out their ways,
And mark'd their journeys right;
Gave them his leading cloud by day,
A fiery guide by night." WATTS.

he threatened to withdraw from them those peculiar manifestations of his presence which they had hitherto enjoyed. Deeply affected by the idea of being abandoned by their almighty friend, Moses improved the liberty with which he was indulged as their intercessor, for soliciting a renewal of their former privileges. By one plea after another, and with all the energy of supplication, he besought the Lord to return to them in mercy. At length he obtained a declaration that *he* should be distinguished by special favours: but a promise for himself alone was not all that he wanted. He could not be satisfied till he was assured that *the people also* should be again honoured with the divine conduct and direction. And now that he had received general directions to remove, and the tabernacle of the Lord had been set up in another place, his solicitude was increased. He therefore intreated with holy importunity that the presence of Jehovah, the light and glory of Israel, might accompany and lead them to their destined habitation. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

Although, in its primary sense, the import of this request is, that the symbol of the *special presence* of Jehovah should attend the Israelites in their removes; yet there is a presence, less sensible indeed, though not less real, which all the pious desire and are encouraged to expect. It is that which is implied in those passages of Scripture which promise that God will be with those who seek his favour, and which speak of his lifting upon them the light of his countenance, guiding them with his counsel, and encompassing them with his protection. It is evidenced in that spiritual illumination which he imparts to the under-

standing, that comfort which is diffused through the heart, that approbation which is testified in the conscience, and especially in those influences which the Holy Spirit bestows, and that witness which it bears with the spirit of the believer; and it is often enjoyed in a peculiar manner in the ardours of private devotion, and in the public worship and ordinances of the sanctuary.

To desire the divine presence in this its more usual display, is to desire the assistance, the guidance and the favour of God; that he would grant the light and direction that we need, prosper the undertakings in which we engage, and bless to our improvement and sanctification the means of religion with which we are indulged. It is, in fine, to desire not only that under the conviction of his OMNIPRESENCE our actions should be approved by him who sees all their motives and knows all their intent; but that he would aid and strengthen each virtuous purpose, and give a prosperous accomplishment to every pious design. Into whatever circumstance of life we are entering or may hereafter enter, whatever station we may be called to fill, or whatever duty to perform, or new step to take or course to pursue, there is nothing about which we should be so solicitous as that GOD may be with us. Particularly should it be our earnest prayer, when we are about to engage in any thing with an immediate reference to his glory and our own spiritual advancement, that He would vouchsafe his concurrence, and accompany us in it with some special tokens of his approbation. And this, my friends, is what we should *now* most fervently seek, in our intended removal from this house of worship. Inconvenient as it is to assemble

any longer in this decayed and shattered building, and pleasant as it may be to congregate in that more convenient and beautiful one now completed for our reception, yet "O Lord, if thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence!"—Unless we may hope to see the divine power and glory *there* so as we have seen them in this sanctuary, the exchange will be to our infinite disadvantage. Unless the Lord approve the erection of that house for his service, they have laboured in vain who built it; and unless he shall favour *us* with his presence there, we shall convene in it in vain. To what purpose shall we go there? What benefit could we expect from worshipping an absent deity? O may he be entreated to honour it with that preference, which its structure and finishing give it in our estimation; and make it as superior to *this* in his manifestations of grace to *us*, as it is in accomodations for our attendance upon *Him!*

Connected with these most important regards, there are thoughts which spontaneously arise in our minds when we are leaving the temple of God to return to it no more, and make the consideration that we are assembling for the last time within these ancient and venerable walls peculiarly solemn and affecting. For so many years have we come up in company to this house of worship, so often have we here presented together our supplications and praise, received here so many lessons of heavenly instruction, and enjoyed here so many sanctuary privileges and advantages, that the place itself has become endeared by the tenderest recollections, and hallowed by the most sacred associations; and it is impossible to quit it with entire indifference. Nor do I know whether there is any

subject more fitted to the hour in which I speak, than a recapitulation of some of the considerations by which this house and this occasion are made interesting to your feelings.

In the first place this ancient house is honoured by you as *the place where your fathers worshipped.*

The edifice, which has stood for many years the sanctuary of devotion, acquires a peculiar veneration. The recollection of the zeal with which it was erected, and the sacred use to which it was appropriated by our predecessors, and that it has long been the favourite resort of those whose virtues and piety found in it excitement and confirmation, bespeaks for it our respect; while every heart must be deeply affected with the thought that we fill the places of those who are now removed to the house appointed for all the living; that we occupy, and that for the last time, the seats of those who are gone down to the congregation of the dead! A very few, indeed, survive, who remember the building of this house; but they feel so sensibly the decays of age, as hardly to expect to outlive its demolition. So that we seem to stand amid the ruins of time, and to see the fabrics and the generations of men falling around us. There is, perhaps, an unwelcome gloom mingled in this reflection; yet there is something inexpressibly consoling to the weakness of humanity in the assurance that the Supreme Disposer is at the same time making provision for the preservation of the Church; and, that instead of the fathers, have come up the children, inspired with like zeal for the promotion of religion; that not contented themselves with living in ceiled houses while the house of the Lord lays waste, before it became wholly un-

tenantable, they have, with the most commendable unanimity, engaged in the erection and completion of another, more spacious and convenient, to which we can immediately resort when we retire from this. In our intended removal we implore the divine presence, and pray that "the Lord God may be with us, as he was with our fathers! Let him never leave us, nor forsake us!"

II. That strong attachment which we naturally acquire for objects to which we have been long accustomed, to the scenes which have become pleasing to us by familiarity, and to the habitations in which we have for many years resided, occasions a deep felt regret at forsaking them. Similar feelings of reluctance are unavoidably excited in your minds by the thought of quitting this house, sacred in its design, venerable by its antiquity, familiar by long use, and precious by the benefits which have resulted from it. It is endeared to you by some of the most interesting recollections. In this place most of you were baptized. At this altar you were dedicated to God, and prayers were made that he would adopt you into his family, and make you heirs of the heavenly inheritance. To awaken in your opening minds an early regard to the sanctuary and a delight in its services, your parents conducted hither your youthful steps, and bade you listen to the instructions here given in that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. Here you offered your first public homage to God, here you have been taught your most essential duties, here you have been excited and encouraged to virtue, here your purposes of devoting yourselves to religion have been formed and strengthened, and here a goodly number

have owned the obligations of the christian covenant and sat down as members of the Church of Christ to partake the ordinance of the Supper, at once the memorial and the pledge of the love of your Saviour, and of your interest in the blessings of his Gospel. And must not the recollection of all this attach you to this place? That it *has* done so, is apparent in the zeal, may I not say the delight, with which you have frequented the assembling here; that it *does still*, is apparent to each of you now, in those emotions that swell your bosoms in the reflection that you assemble here for the last time. No longer will you convene here for the purposes of religious worship. No longer will these walls resound with the voice of your praise. These seats are to be quitted, and the places which once knew you here, are to know you no more. Much as your judgment favours the contemplated removal to another sanctuary, your feelings reluct at quitting this; and notwithstanding the delightful anticipations which await your going hence, it still seems good to be here.

How similar are some of these sensibilities to those of the departing Christian! He finds the earthly house of his tabernacle dissolving, and the soul about to quit its decayed and shattered mansion; and though he knows that he has a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens; yet still he lingers, still feels an unaccountable reluctance to depart, while the last expression of his heart is, "O Lord, if thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence!"

III. Various considerations render this edifice venerable to me also. I have both loved it as the habitation of God's house and the place where his honour

dwelleth, and as that where for many years I have met those in whose spiritual welfare I feel the most affectionate interest, from whose attachment I have derived the most animating satisfactions, and whom I hope to find acknowledged hereafter as the seals of my ministry and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

In the pulpit, in which I stand for the last time, I was ordained to the work of the ministry among you.* The memory of the interesting scene rises fresh upon my mind. Again I seem to hear the voice of paternal exhortation from that guide and patron of my youth, who has now given me his last counsels; to listen again to the solemn charge from lips long since closed in silence, and to feel the warm pressure of that hand of christian fellowship, which death has now chilled. Ah! how many of those who bade me welcome then, have since bidden me adieu!† Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets do they live forever! They are gone; and bid us also arise and depart, for this is not our rest.

IV. The change which we are about to make suggests to you some affecting meditations upon the ad-

* Ordination October 23, 1793. The *Sermon* on that occasion was delivered by the Rev. Samuel Kendal of Weston, my early instructer and friend; the consecrating prayer was made by Rev. Joseph Jackson of Brookline; the *Charge* was given by the Rev. Nathaniel Robbins of Milton; the *Right hand of Fellowship* presented by the Rev. Jason Haven of Dedham.

Mr. Robbins, died May 19. 1795.
Mr. Jackson, July 22. 1796.
Mr. Haven, May 17. 1803.
Dr. Kendal, Feb. 15. 1814.

† I soon after joined "the Boston Association;" the ministers who *then* composed it, as pastors of the Congregational Churches in *Boston*, viz. Drs. Howard, Clarke, Belknap, Thacher, West, Eckley, Eliot, and Lathrop, have all deceased.

vantages which you have here enjoyed, and the manner in which they have been improved. If it be pleasant to remember the opportunities which have been indulged you of uniting here in social worship, of sharing here in sanctuary privileges, and of listening to the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation; it must be painful too to reflect that you have not prized them as you ought, nor profited by them more. The memory of years gone by, which furnished precious seasons for religious edification that were unimproved, of invitations and warnings heedlessly regarded, and even of covenant engagements but partially fulfilled, must serve to increase your painful regrets on the present occasion. In this tender moment, therefore, and ere you quit forever the place where your best means and privileges have been supplied, and your most solemn professions have been made, pause, and be persuaded seriously to ask yourselves what effect they have had; how you have heard and received; how much you retain; how much you have lost? It is a solemn question, and solemn are the images, which memory must bring to every heart; and the best and wisest of us have no answer to return but what penitence must dictate and shame must utter; and we have all need to prostrate ourselves in sadness before the majesty we have disobeyed.

It is time now to look at the temple of the heart, to explore its recesses, to see what are its defects and where it may be restored, and to enquire whether its affections and graces are not in a more lamentable state of decay than the edifice you abandon because too much defaced to deserve repair. Oh what an awful intimation to you!—"God requireth that which is

past." What account have you to render of the advantages with which you have been indulged, of the various ordinances of the sanctuary, and of all the helps to piety and to godliness which have been here afforded? Has their end been answered? Has your piety been increased by the devotions of this house, and your obedience confirmed by the instructions here imparted? Have you felt the influence of divine truth, made improvement in knowledge and holiness, gained a comfortable evidence of your preparation for heaven, and can you leave this house as you would wish to leave the world, with a well founded hope of the approbation of God?

Leave this house, did I say? Yes! the time has arrived for our bidding the edifice, honoured as the place of our religious assembling, a last farewell. Yet ere its doors are opened for our retiring steps, and we leave it to the desolation which is hastening on it, we bless God that it has been preserved to us so long, and that we have enjoyed in it so many times of refreshing from his presence and favour. We pay it this tribute of our respect, and acknowledge it to be venerable even in ruins—but its glory has departed—Arise, let us go hence!

DEDICATORY SERMON,

DECEMBER 2d. 1816.

EXODUS xxxiii. 14.

MY PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE, AND I WILL GIVE THEE REST.

RELYING upon this assurance, Moses led forward the people of Israel towards the promised land. Encouraged by faith in the divine presence and aid, the spiritual guide conducts the christian flock towards the heavenly Canaan. And devoutly hoping that God will vouchsafe the like favour to *us*, we now enter the edifice which we have erected for his service and dedicated to his glory. Our reasons for indulging this hope are founded on his ancient promise, "In all places where I record my name will I come unto you and bless you;" on the truth and goodness which have been evinced in its fulfilment to the assemblies of devout worshippers in every age; and on the expected answer to those prayers which we have unitedly and earnestly made to him who fulfils the desires of those that wait upon him, and *that* most readily when they supplicate what is immediately subservient to the edification of his Church and the advancement of his kingdom of grace and holiness among men. Yes, my friends, let us believe, that for the honour of his name and for the spiritual joy of your

hearts, he comes this day to visit this tabernacle; that this edifice, erected by your zeal under the auspices of his providence, his favour will accept and consecrate for your use in his service; that these walls, which for the first time resound with his praise, he will fill with his glory; and that from this sacred desk, by the voice of his ministers, he invites you to come into his presence with thanksgiving, and to make yourselves joyful in the house of prayer.

God, indeed, is as really present every where as he is any where, filling at once both heaven and earth; immense as he is eternal; and cannot be circumscribed within the limits of a material building, how spacious soever it may be. In this sense, as Solomon declared when he had completed the magnificent edifice which he had erected, "The most high dwelleth not in temples made with hands, for behold the heaven, even the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, much less this house which I have built;" and yet he adds, "I have surely built thee a house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide forever." And in one of the Psalms, God himself is introduced as saying, "Jehovah hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for a habitation. This is my rest, here will I dwell, for I have desired it." The patriarch Jacob, also, considered the spot where he was favoured with a prophetic vision, and saw the communication opened between earth and heaven, as specially honoured by the divine presence; and declared, "Surely the Lord is in this place! This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven."—So that, though it be the constant language of Scripture that God is essentially present in all places, yet there are some occasions in which he

is pleased to give peculiar impressions of his more immediate presence, intimations of his will, or assurances of his care and regard. To the patriarchs this gracious manifestation was often made; and the altar on which their oblations were offered was hallowed by tokens of his favour. To the Israelites, on their separation from the idolatrous nations, it was granted on various occasions; in the pillar of cloud and fire which directed their journeyings to the promised land, in the light which shone around the tabernacle, and especially in the visible glory which filled the temple at its dedication.

But the patriarchal altar, and the Jewish tabernacle and temple were only preparatory to a more spiritual worship, to be introduced and established by Him who was prefigured in all their rites, oblations and sacrifices. Accordingly, on the promulgation of the gospel, our Saviour declared that "neither on mount Gerizim in Samaria, nor yet in the temple at Jerusalem should men worship the Father; but that the hour had come when the true worshippers should worship him in spirit and in truth." By which he intimated that distinction and preference of places was not of essential importance; but that the homage which was sincere should be accepted wherever it was offered.

Yet, though it be true that God is every where present to hear and to bless those who call upon him in spirit and in truth, and that he is not more acceptably worshipped in one place than another; though there be no place where his providence does not watch, where his power is not exerted, where his graces cannot descend upon the humble and the pious, and

where their prayers may not arise—still it must be evident that social worship is necessarily connected with the circumstances of *place* as well as of time.

Christians are enjoined "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together;" there must, therefore, be a place in which they are to convene. Christ has instituted ordinances and appointed teachers of his religion; there must, then, be some place where his ministers may execute their commission, proclaim the word of reconciliation, lead the worship of the faithful, and dispense the ordinances of salvation.

Accordingly, from the earliest times of christianity, houses have been erected and set apart for this purpose; and though there be not any inherent sanctity in the building itself, yet from its appropriation it acquires a sacredness in our estimation; and, as in the rites and worship there celebrated, God becomes more intimately present to the mind, so in their observance we are said not only to "enter into his presence," but to "come nigh even to his seat." This nearness of approach to him, realized and enjoyed in the exercises of devotion, is the most delightful privilege of the pious; and the conviction that he is with them in the special manifestations of his favour, is the most gladdened feeling that their souls can experience. Yes, my friends, this is the greatest and most comprehensive benefit which we can enjoy in our present state. *To have* God *with us*, imports all which we can need from him in this distinguished relation, in our passage and probation through the scenes of time; as *to be with* God is the most usual expression for describing the happiness of the world to come.

It is this gracious presence which we entreat and hope to attend us on commencing publick worship in

this house to day, and that it will be granted in all the religious exercises which shall hereafter be performed in this place.

You have long, my friends, felt your need and expressed your desire of a more decent and comfortable place for divine worship than that in which you last assembled; and rejoice to see this day in which one is prepared and dedicated. It is, indeed, a pleasing consideration that you can now congregate in a new, and firm, and convenient edifice, where you will not have your devotions disturbed by the flapping of shattered casements; nor hear the loosened mortise in the wall cry out, and the beam from the timber answer it; nor, as the wind rises, be filled with trepidation lest the trembling pillars should crush you with their fall. "Strength and beauty are in this tabernacle;" and we have all reason to be "satisfied with the goodness of the house."

On this solemn and joyful occasion, I tender you, most cordially, my congratulations. Whereas it was in your hearts to build a house unto the name of the Lord, ye have done well in taking measures for the accomplishment of so pious a purpose. I cannot but recognize with devout gratitude the smiles of heaven upon your undertaking; and am truly thankful that it was commenced with such unanimity, has been carried on with such promptitude and zeal, and is completed without any disastrous accident, and in a manner so creditable to the workmen who have reared and finished, and to the committee who have superintended the building. While *they* rest from their labours, they must derive a cheering satisfaction from the thought that they have wrought a good work,

which will be a lasting monument of their skill and diligence, an ornament and honour to this parish, and a credit to that sacred cause itself to which it is devoted.

It has proved a costly undertaking, and the expense will fall heavily upon many who can ill afford it. But when reminded that it is incurred in building *a house for* God, you will not grudge your liberality in beautifying the place of his sanctuary. When you consider how much its erection conduces to your own accommodation, you will the more readily make the sacrifice requisite for obtaining so desirable a benefit to yourselves. And when you reflect that you have prepared a house of worship, so thoroughly built that it is likely to prove an advantage to your successors for a century to come, you will not reluct at the cost which procures them a legacy so valuable and so durable.

The elevated situation of the building, its graceful appearance, and its magnificent spire towering towards heaven, as should our affections, and bearing our record on high,* attract the eyes of even distant beholders, as well as command the admiration of all who approach; while its beautiful interior is particularly gratifying to all who enter in.† But are these material ornaments the only recommendations of this edifice? the only beauty of which it is capable? No! there is another beauty infinitely fairer than any that we can behold with our bodily eyes, a spiritual and heavenly beauty, the glory of the gospel, the most illustrious display of the divine wisdom and beneficence, the supreme desire and joy of our hearts; and

* In the upper ball of the steeple is a record of the former meeting houses and ministers, and of the erection of this building, written by Samuel Norwood, Esq.

† Ezek. xxvii. 4. "Thy builders have perfected thy beauty"—

that temple is finished and complete in beauty where this glory shines, where it irradiates the understandings and warms the hearts of the worshippers; and if the Lord of Hosts, in favour of our design and in answer to our prayers, shall say, "This is the place of my rest, here will I dwell, and here will I establish peace," then this house is truly magnificent, and they who frequent it will see the beauty of the Lord and find the place of his rest glorious. Happy indeed shall we be if his presence be vouchsafed us here in all its cheering influence, and this peace fully enjoyed as the pledge and anticipation of all other blessedness! Thrice happy, if we always cherish that esteem and love and reverence for this sanctuary, which the destination of it demands; if our carriage be adjusted to the idea of his majesty whose courts we enter, and our whole deportment here be such as best suits the sacredness of the place and the honour of him to whom it is dedicated; and everlastingly happy if we improve in those habits of holiness and piety which the sacred exercises here to be performed are intended to produce and perfect!

You rejoice, my friends, that you have erected a temple where God may receive your vows and answer your prayers. Your joy is reasonable and pious; but, all reasonable and pious as it is, it will be vain, if as this church is now dedicated to God by you, you do not dedicate yourselves to him in his church. Give him, therefore, your hearts, that he may dwell in you, and be your God, and own you as his people. Then shall you be blessed indeed. Then shall "ye also, as lively stones, be built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ." And let your joy manifest itself, not

merely in the cheerfulness which deservedly appears among you this day, but by letting your future behaviour here shew how truly sensible you are of the privileges you possess; by your constancy in assembling yourselves together in this place on holy days; by approaching it with hearts prepared for the sacred services you are here to perform; by the fervour of your prayers and thanksgivings, and by shewing that your zeal for worshipping God in his house is as great as it was for building it. Offer up your fervent and continued petitions that God would condescend to be present with you on all the occasions of your solemnly assembling together in this house, and favour you with the desirable displays of his saving power and of his amiable glories in his sanctuary. Let it be your hearts desire and prayer, that here the heavenly doctrines of the gospel may be preached and its holy ordinances administered in their genuine purity and simplicity; that here an uninterrupted succession of able ministers of the New Testament may deliver the messages and counsels of salvation, and prove the honoured instruments of turning many sinners from darkness to light, and of building up believers in our most holy faith; and that here one generation after another, through the word of truth and the spirit of grace, may be born to God, may be nourished and strengthened by the provisions of his house, and thus be trained up and prepared for the glory and felicity of heaven!

Ever honoured by us shall be this house of worship. With the most profound reverence, and with thankful and cheerful hearts will we enter its gates, and celebrate here the noblest services, and seek and hope to receive here the most invaluable blessings. Here may you increase in knowledge and goodness, and here en-

joy in foretaste the blessedness of that better world, where with the just made perfect, with spirits of a superior order, you shall celebrate the praises of the Most High, and enjoy his blissful presence to all eternity!

This, my hearers, this is the fervent desire of my heart; this is the greatest, the most precious blessing that I know how to ask for you to day, when for the first time I speak to you from this place. This will ever be the subject of my most devout prayers on your behalf, and will give earnestness to the last that my lips can utter.

This day completes 72 years since our former meeting house was dedicated. There is something pleasing in this recurrence of dates. It carries us back to an event which our fathers celebrated with gladness. While reverting to the occasion, and musing on the circumstances which made it interesting, we scarcely heed the flight of time, or realize that revolving years could effect such changes since as have really taken place, till, awakening from the reverie, we perceive that "the former things are passed away, and all things have become new." Instead of a shattered and decaying edifice, we find ourselves in one finished with better accommodations, and adorned with fresh beauty. Instead of the gloom that was increasing around us, we are here cheered with a clearer and fairer light, against the admission of which no window is closed;* and, whatever may have been our performances there, we are called to a nobler worship here. We behold, too, convened in one assembly, those from whom we have been divided, and some to whom we have been strangers; who come to congrat-

* After the storm of September 22, 1815, the windows in the meeting house which had been broken were boarded up.

ulate us on this auspicious occasion, to unite in the same acknowledgments of gratitude, and to mingle accordant voices in the same anthems of praise. How much is all this like to what we conceive will be displayed to our enraptured souls when this earthly fabric of our tabernacle shall be dissolved, and we shall enter the building of God, the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens! Then, too, shall we be surrounded by those who will be welcome though we might not have given the invitation; who will rejoice with us, though they belonged not to our particular society here, and with whom we shall cordially unite in a celebration of which the present, sublime and animating as it is, affords but a faint specimen. O christians, what extatic bliss is reserved in heaven for us! What divine and inconceivable joys must break in upon our souls when introduced into the glorious presence of God, that presence where there is fulness of joy and pleasures forevermore! What words can express the transports that shall rise and swell in our minds as we shall survey the grandeur and splendor of that upper temple, join the bright assembly of fellow worshippers met together in it, and engage in the exalted services there to be performed! Let the delightful exercises of the present occasion give us some pleasing anticipations of that beatific scene; and may each of us, when summoned hence, receive from the Father of our spirits the gracious assurance, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

APPENDIX.

SECTION I.

I. THE first Meeting House in Dorchester was situated on the plain, not far from "Old Harbour," and near to where the Pavilion now stands. It was probably formed of logs, and was but one story high. "It was surrounded by pallisadoes; was the place for the deposit of military stores, and for resort in case of alarm from the Indians. A sentinel was kept at the gate every night; and thither the people carried their plate and most valuable articles every evening to be preserved in safety."

It was endangered by a circumstance which Governour WINTHROP thought of sufficient importance to be inserted in his Journal. "March, 1632, Mr. MAVERICK, drying a little powder, it took fire by the heat of the pan, fired a small barrel of two or three pounds, yet did no other damage but singe his clothes: it was in the new meeting house, which was thatched, and the thatch only blacked a little."—By its being called "the new meeting house," I infer that it was built the preceding autumn, that is, in the year 1631.

Nov. 3. 1634, an order was passed "to build stairs on the outside, and the loft to be laid, and a window made in the loft."

II. In consequence of the increase of the town, it soon became necessary to have a larger building for the use of public worship; and on the 14th. day of the 1st. month [March] 1645, a rate of *l.*250 was assessed, and a Committee appointed for the erection. The next year it was finished and seated.

On the 28th day of the 9th month, [December,] 1653, a vote was passed "to repair the meeting house with ground-sills, daubing, clap-boards, and glass in

the windows." The *daubing* was probably closing the chinks, on the inside, with clay, to exclude the cold of the season.

In the year 1665 some persons constructed a gallery for their own accommodation, without obtaining leave of the Selectmen. This was objected to at first, but afterwards obtained the sanction of the town: and, in the year 1667, a corresponding gallery was ordered to be erected at the west end of the meeting house, "in such a form that all the boys might be there seated."

At a town meeting, 27th. day of the 4th. month, [June] 1670, "Voted that the meeting house be removed to Rocky Hill, by the school; and be set up in the form that it now is." The Committee, appointed to accomplish this, and to fix upon a proper place for it, agreed upon "a spot near the lime kiln." They were directed to have the work finished by September of the next year. We have no record to ascertain when this was accomplished; but as the Rev. JOSIAH FLINT was ordained on the 27th. of December 1671, that may have been the day of first entering it.*

This, however, was but a humble edifice; and it was scarcely rebuilt before measures were devised for the erection of another. The subject having been repeatedly brought before the town, in 1677 a rate was assessed to build a new meeting house. The work was

* "The 10th. day of the 10th. month [December,] 1671, the major part of the Church did agree by a vote that Mr. ELIOT of Roxbury should be desired to manage the work of the ordination, and giving the Charge, though some of the brethren were not so free thereunto, but would have had it performed by the Church alone, but the Ruling Elder desired to be spared therein.

"The 24th. (10) 1671, the Ruling Elder proposed to the Church that some other brethren or brother might be appointed to lay on hands at the time of ordination, or else some other elders, but the Church appointed only Deacon Capen to be added to Mr. ELIOT, and the ruling elder.

"The 27 (10) 1671, the work of ordination of Mr. JOSIAH FLINT, to be a pastor unto this church of Dorchester, was solemnized; and it was approved of by the elders and messengers of the churches sent unto, [viz. the three churches in Boston, and those of Charlestown, Cambridge, Roxbury and Weymouth,] and Mr. CHAUNCY was appointed in the name of all the churches to give the Right Hand of Fellowship."

[*Church Records.*]

undertaken by Mr. Isaac Royal, and performed for *l.*200; and, after the building was completed, he bought the old one for *l.*10.*

III. The first assembling in this Meeting House was on the 17th. of November, 1678.† The form of the building was square; two stories high; with a pyramidal roof, terminating in a cupola, in which was hung the bell. From the Church Record of seating the meeting house, it appears that in front of the pulpit was a large pew, "at the table," in which were seated twelve persons, the elders and fathers of the town. Just below this was a seat for the deacons. On each side of the broad aisle were long seats, in which the inhabitants were placed according to their seniority; the men on one side, and the women on the other. As this seating does not include the families of the minister, Rev. Mr. FLINT, Lieut. Gov. STOUGHTON, and some other principal inhabitants, I infer that they had pews on each side of the pulpit. That there were such pews, and considered as private property, of course built at the expense of the individuals who occupied them, is proved by the vote of the town

* The *stand* of curiously wrought iron, *which supported the Hour Glass* in the pulpit, has been preserved, and is now deposited in the vestry of the meeting house erected in the year 1816.

† Nathaniel, the son of Thomas Maudesley, baptized the 10th. day of the 9th. month [November,] 1678, being the last baptized in the old meeting house. Remember, the son of Daniel Preston jun. and Susanna, the daughter of John Breck, baptized the 17th of November 1678, *being the first day of meeting in the new meeting house.* [*Church Records.*]

"The first of December 1678 Mr. FLINT proposed to the Church to keep a day of Thanksgiving The grounds of it were an engagement that was made to GOD if he should hear prayers and restore Captain CLAP to health again, being sick about a year and a half ago; also in regard to Mr. STOUGHTON, whom although he be not yet returned, yet GOD hath preserved, and so far blessed his endeavours for the public; also because GOD hath so much preserved our town from and under that contagious distemper the small pox, when he hath so sadly visited other places, as Charlestown, Boston, &c; as also FOR THE PEACE WE ENJOY IN THIS TOWN, *notwithstanding the great fear of a disquietment in regard to some public transactions about our* MEETING HOUSE, and other mercies. The time proposed was our next lecture day, being the 18th. of December. To this motion the church agreed." [*Church Records.*]

[Note. In 1677 Lieutenant Gov. STOUGHTON went as agent to England, on the subject of the complaints of GORGES and MASON concerning the patent line.]

when this meeting house was replaced by another, "that those who owned pews be permitted to take them away, before the sale of the building." There were also galleries with seats for the unmarried persons and children.

It seems that the sides of the hill were yet covered with forest trees; and the town passed a vote, 1679, "that the trees that grow thereabout shall be by the Selectmen, from time to time, so ordered as they shall judge meet, either for standing or disposing of some of them." A number of elm trees were set out in front of the meeting house, by Mr. THOMAS TILESTONE.

In 1714 stairs were ordered to be made from the beams up to the turret, and the house repaired; and the next year a porch was built at the south door.

* This place of public worship having fallen into decay, and being too small to accommodate the inhabitants, measures were taken for building another, and a vote passed for that purpose August 24, 1742.

IV. A new meeting house was raised June 29, 1743, upon the plain ground, a few rods to the southward of the former, before the elm trees.† The joy of the occasion was sadly interrupted in consequence of the fall of Mr. EPHRAIM WALES from one of the beams. He died the next day.

The dimensions of the building were 68 feet by 46, with a tower 14 feet square, and a steeple 114 feet high to the vane. The whole cost three thousand five hundred and sixty seven pounds, ten shillings and eleven pence, O. T. The first meeting in it was, on the 2d. of December, 1744, when Mr. BOWMAN preach-

* "Sept. 6, 1730. Baptized Ann, daughter of Mr. Fairweather of Boston." [*Church Records.*] Her mother had come to reside in Dorchester, to avoid the small pox which prevailed this year in Boston. On the occasion of her baptism, her father presented what was then considered *an elegant* STAND *to support the christening bason;* and which is now preserved in the new vestry. She was the third wife of THADDEUS MASON, Esq. of Charlestown, the grand parent of the writer of this note.

† These noble trees were cut down at the commencement of the late revolutionary war.—An elm tree set out by Deacon Edward Pierce, opposite the south west corner of the meeting house, is now standing.

ed a sermon suitable to the occasion from Psal. lxxxiv. 1. On leaving the old house, the Lord's day preceding, he discoursed from Revelations iii. 3.*

The town's committee sold "the stuff and materials of the old meeting house as it stood, except the bell, casements, glass and lead, to EBENEZER MOSELEY, EBENEZER WISWALL, and JOHN BRADLEY, jun. for *l.*90.

"In 1752 the new bell was hung. It was given by the proprietors of the common and undivided lands, late in the township of Dorchester, and now in Stoughton. It was imported from Bristol in England; weighs 785 lbs. and cost *l.*50 sterling."†

September 23, 1753, began to read the Scriptures as a part of the public service on the Lord's day

In 1795 the meeting house was enlarged, by first dividing it along the ridge pole, and moving off one half 14 feet, and then building an addition in the middle; after which the tower and steeple were moved, standing, seven feet, to bring it to the centre of the end. This operation was performed by Deacon EDWARD PIERCE, by means of screws, and with the strength of only four men.

In consequence of the injury which this building suffered from the violent storm of September 23, 1815, and its general state of decay, it was judged past repair; and a parish meeting was holden October 23d, following,‡ to consider the expediency of of building a new meeting house. A large and respectable Committee was appointed to take the subject into consideration, who reported at the adjourned meeting, Nov. 2d, in favour of the erection. Their report being accepted, the following persons were elected as a Committee for the accomplishment of the important undertaking; viz. Deacon JAMES HUMPHREYS, Deacon EBENEZER CLAP, Captain MOSES IN-

* Thomas, son of Samuel Blake, and Bethiah, daughter of James Howe, were the first children baptized in this house.

† BLAKE's Manuscript Annals.

‡ Being the anniversary of the ordination of Rev. T. M. Harris.

GLEE, Doctor HENRY GARDNER, Major EDWARD ROBINSON, Mr. DANIEL WITHINGTON, Captain SAMUEL H. EVERETT, Mr. BENJAMIN JACOBS, Mr. SAMUEL CLAP, THOMAS MOSELEY, Esq., SAMUEL P. LOUD, Esq., Mr. WILLIAM POPE, Captain NATHANIEL MINOT, and Mr. LEWIS PIERCE. These gentlemen chose as a sub-committee more immediately to make contracts and superintend the building, Deacon JAMES HUMPHREYS, Doctor HENRY GARDNER, Major EDWARD ROBINSON, Deacon EBENEZER CLAP, and Mr. WILLIAM POPE; and appointed Mr. BENJAMIN JACOBS and Capt. S. H. EVERETT, *master builders.*

V. On the 16th of May, 1816, the corner stone was laid in due form by the members of UNION LODGE in Dorchester. A large concourse of spectators assembled on the occasion; and a procession, formed of the Parish Committee, the artificers, and the operative masons, conducted the Lodge to the place. The services were introduced by prayer by the Rev. Dr. HARRIS; then a sacred ode, prepared for the occasion, was sung; after which the stone was laid with the solemn rites and honours of masonry. Another ode was sung, and the benediction was pronounced. After an Address by the Pastor, Deacon HUMPHREYS delivered the tools for building to the workmen employed for its erection, with the following CHARGE.

"GENTLEMEN,

In behalf of the parish committee I congratulate you on this occasion. The *corner stone* for the foundation of the SACRED EDIFICE here to be erected is now laid, and I deliver over to you the implements of the artificers by which the work is to be constructed. We intrust you the master workmen with the superintendence and direction of the building. Let it be prepared, formed, and finished in a masterly manner, as becomes a temple for the worship and honour of GOD. And let me charge you, and the labourers that you shall employ, not only to be diligent and faithful, but discreet; and

to remember that you are not only working for *us*, but in a peculiar sense for God, in building a house for *him*. Let there be, therefore, no unworthy contention and no unsuitable indulgence among you; but all the conduct of all the workmen be such that God may approve *them*, and the *work* in which they are engaged; and may he bless us, and we ascribe to him the glory. Amen!"

It may be remarked that the venerable Deacon Edward Pierce was present, 81 years of age; and the circumstance of its being his *birth day*, (mentioned by him on arriving at the spot;) and that he was at the raising of the former meeting house, and had been employed in repairing and enlarging it, gave a new interest to the impressive ceremonies on this occasion.

On Monday, June 17th, after devout prayer, the raising was commenced. This arduous and hazardous undertaking, which was continued through seveal days, and employed many hands, was accomplished without any of the workmen having suffered the least injury.

The house is 72 feet 9 inches long, 62 wide, with posts 32 feet high; and the total height of the tower and turrets is 128 feet, 10 inches. It contains 94 pews below, and 24 in the galleries. The public papers have mentioned it in the following terms. "The edifice is finished in a masterly manner, and is an honour to the town; the steeple, in particular, is considered as a most beautiful specimen of architecture, makes a graceful appearance, and, from its elevated situation, as well as its towering height, is seen to advantage from the neighbouring towns, and is a kind of pharos to the harbour; so that the most conspicuous object that meets the eyes of the sailors as they enter the port, is one which recals to them the services of religion, and mingles the thoughts of piety with the gladness of arrival."

The cushions of the pulpit are of crimson velvet, trimmed with tassels; and the curtains of the window are of rich silk damask, with silk fringe. These beautiful decorations were furnished by the Ladies of the Parish.

An elegant clock, placed in the front gallery, was presented by HENRY GARDNER, Esq.

The whole expence of the building amounted to *twenty thousand one hundred and eighty eight dollars;* which, together with the compensation of fifty dollars awarded to each pew in the old meeting house owned by members of the parish, was assessed upon the pews, after reserving the two broad aisle pews and the two wall pews nearest to the pulpit for the use of the parish; the whole front gallery for the use of the singers, and one half of each side gallery for public seats. From the sale of 86 pews, the premium for choice, above the apprized valuation, amounted to *two thousand one hundred and fourteen dollars and fifty cents.*

The last day of meeting in the old house was Dec. 1, 1816. The sermon in the forenoon was from Revelations iii. 3. "*Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent;*" and in the afternoon from Exodus xxxiii. 15. "*If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* On the next day, being the anniversary of the dedication of the old meeting house, the new one was DEDICATED. The services of the occasion were an introductory prayer by the Rev. JOHN CODMAN, pastor of the second church in Dorchester; lesson from the Scripture by the Rev. THOMAS GRAY, pastor of the second church in Roxbury; hymn, composed for the occasion by Mr. NATHANIEL TOPLIFF; the dedicatory prayer by the Rev. ELIPHALET PORTER, D. D. pastor of the first church in Roxbury; sermon, on Exodus xxxiii. 14.; a prayer by the Rev. JOHN PIERCE of Brookline; a hymn, followed by an anthem; and the benediction.

The services were solemn and impressive; and the music, performed by the three choirs of the town, was very excellent.

We are greatly indebted to the unwearied exertions of the Committee, to whom the Parish assigned the arrangements and superintendence of the building; and acknowledge, with pleasure, the promptness and fidelity with which the builders, who undertook the work, have fulfilled their engagements. Indeed the honourable and faithful manner in which the work has been executed, has met the entire approbation both of the Committee and the Society at large.

PSALM

Used at the last singing on leaving the Old Meeting House, written by Dr. Doddridge.

My soul, review the time,
In which my God I sought;
I cry'd aloud for aid divine,
And aid divine he brought.

Through all my fainting heart
His secret vigour spread;
To me his strength he did impart,
And rais'd my drooping head.

Then will I raise my voice,
And form a cheerful song;
With all the saints I will rejoice
Who to his courts belong.

With them the path I'll trace
Which leads to his abode;
And join to sing redeeming grace
Along the joyful road.

Here flowers of paradise,
In rich profusion spring;
There Zion's lofty towers arise,
The seat of Zion's king.

Within *those* sacred walls,
I shall be ever blest;
I'll follow where my father calls,
And seek his heavenly rest.

DEDICATORY HYMN.

Composed by Mr. Nathaniel Topliff.

1 GREAT Architect divine
Who rais'd all nature's frame,

Accept and own as thine
This house, built for thy name!
Arise, O Lord,
Into thy rest,
And here afford
What makes us blest!

2 Thy temple is all space,
But still thy wond'rous love
And condescending grace
Assembling crowds shall prove.
Thou fillest all,
Thou God alone;
And Seraphs fall
Before thy throne.

3 Though Heaven cannot contain
Thy glory Lord of all,
No humble soul in vain
Upon his God shall call,
Where two or three
Are well agreed
In seeking thee,
They shall succeed.

4 A house for God we found,
And in it we appear
To hear the joyful sound
Of free salvation here;
And to receive
The joyful news,
Obey, believe,
And not abuse.

5 Here grant thy presence, Lord,
And smile on our design;
And bless thy holy word,
With energy divine!
Here may we find
Our souls renew'd,
Our graces shine,
Our sins subdu'd!

6 Dear Lord, we praise the grace
That show'd our feet the way
To such a blessed place;
Let us abide and stay:
Or when we rise
Be so improv'd
As 'bove the skies
To meet belov'd!

7 O gather all mankind
Unto thy temple, Lord,
And happy may they find
How well thy house is stor'd.
Full chorus swell
From every tongue,
And grace to tell
Be all their song!

HYMN.

1 O THOU whose radiant glory shines
Through the bright realms above,
Where angels chant their hymns divine,
And saints adore and love!

2 Not heaven's immeasurable space
Thy fulness can contain;
Yet, Lord, in condescending grace,
Thy temple is with men.

3 Descend, then, O indulgent God!
To thine own work be near;
Make now this temple thine abode,
And bless thy people here!

4 Here may we ever taste and see
Rich blessings from above;
All doubts be solv'd in charity,
All discord lost in love!

5 Freely to us, as life proceeds,
Be, Lord, thy influence given
To guide us in the path that leads
To happiness and heaven!

SECTION II.

OF THE SECOND PARISH IN DORCHESTER.

Extracted from the Appendix to the Sermon of the Rev. John Pierce *of Brookline, on the gathering of the second Congregational Church in Dorchester, January* 1, 1808.

"In consequence of the increased population of the town of Dorchester, the meeting house was so filled, that many respectable families, who had of later years become inhabitants, could not procure pews; and even individuals found it difficult to obtain a seat. From the remoteness of their dwellings, principally, about sixty families had been in the habit of attending publick wor-

ship in neighbouring towns. These, and other circumstances, led to the project of building another edifice for religious assembly. Accordingly a subscription was raised of one hundred and thirteen shares; about an acre of ground, in what is called "the upper road," was purchased for the site of the edifice; workmen were engaged; and the erection of the frame commenced on the morning of the 7th August, 1805. On this occasion a large number of the inhabitants assembled to unite in prayer to the Supreme Architect for a blessing on the undertaking. The raising being completed, on the 13th following, a larger concourse of people convened; devout thanksgivings were returned for the success with which it had been accomplished, and that the artificers and assistants had sufferred no disaster in their arduous and hazardous labour; and hymns and anthems were chanted by the choir of singers.

"The building is 68 feet by 74; the posts 33 feet high, with a handsome tower and steeple.

"A handsome clock was presented by his Excellency James Bowdoin, Esq. Minister Plenipotentiary to the court of Spain; and a large pulpit bible, bound in morocco and elegantly gilt, by John Welles, Esq.

"The house was publickly dedicated, 30th October, 1806; when a discourse was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Harris, from Acts ii. 42, which has been printed."

A second parish having been incorporated, the Rev. John Codman was ordained their pastor Dec. 7, 1808.

SECTION III.

The New South Meeting House, in the third parish in Dorchester, was erected in the year 1813, and *dedicated* October 6th. The sermon, on that occasion, was preached by the Rev. Dr. Lathrop of Boston, from 2 Chron. vi. 40. "*Now, my* God, *let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.*"

72-9
62
149
449
46½
5620½

68
72
62

Square feet 1 floor

65 × 74 = 4812 In principal room
72½ × 62 = 4500 The Hall

Sung at the dedication of the Meeting of Hobart Town Dec 24. 1852

Now would we praise thee, Lord of Light!
Thou, unto whom all praise belongs!
The earth is veiled in shades of night,
But heaven is open to our songs.

We would adore thee, God sublime,
Whose power and wisdom, love and grace,
Are greater than the round of time,
Are wider than the bounds of space.

Yet thou art present with us here,
As in thy glittering, high domain;
And grateful hearts and humble fear
Can never seek thy face in vain.

Help us to praise thee, Lord of light;
Help us to feel thy Spirit's care;
As first we fill these courts to-night,
Aid ~~them~~ thou, and bless us in our prayer.

2.

O God, where'er thy people meet,
There they behold thy mercy-seat;
Where'er they seek thee, thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground.

For thou, within no walls confined,
Inhabitest the humble mind;

Such ever bring thee where they come,
And, going, take thee to their home.

Here may we prove the power of prayer
To strengthen faith, and sweeten care;
To teach our faint desires to rise,
And bring the blessing from the skies.

3.

O Thou, whose own vast temple stands,
  Built over earth and sea,
Accept the walls that human hands
  Have raised to Christ and Thee.

Lord, from thine inmost glory send,
  Within these courts to 'bide,
The peace that dwelleth, without end,
  Serenely by thy side.

May erring minds that worship here
  Be taught the better way,
And they who mourn, and they who fear,
  Be strengthened as they pray!

May faith grow firm, and love grow warm,
  And pure devotion rise,
While round these hallowed walls the storm
  Of earth-born passion dies.

1.

Now would we praise thee, Lord of Light!
Thou, unto whom all praise belongs!
The earth is veiled in shades of night,
But heaven is open to our songs.

We would adore thee, God sublime,
Whose power and wisdom, love and grace,
Are greater than the round of time,
Are wider than the bounds of space.

Yet thou art present with us here,
As in thy glittering, high domain;
And grateful hearts and humble fear
Can never seek thy face in vain.

Help us to praise thee, Lord of light;
Help us to feel thy Spirit's care;
As first we fill these courts to-night,
Aid ~~them~~ thou, and bless us in our prayer.

2.

O God, where'er thy people meet,
There they behold thy mercy-seat;
Where'er they seek thee, thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground.

For thou, within no walls confined,
Inhabitest the humble mind;